

**KwaZulu Natal Early Childhood Development Community of
Practice**

Virtual meeting 3 June 2021

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

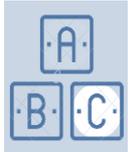
1. PRESENTATIONS

1	Title	Parenting For Life Long Health: An overview
	Presenter	Mpume Danisa
	Organisation	Clowns Without Borders South Africa
	Key Theme	Looking into evidence-informed group-based parenting programmes.
2	Title	Parenting For Life Long Health: Lessons Learned
	Presenter	Hlengiwe Sacolo
	Organisation	Clowns Without Borders South Africa
	Key Theme	Lessons learned from the implementation of evidence-informed parenting programmes.
3	Title	The Parent Centre: Caregiver Support and Parent- Child Engagement
	Presenters	Jann Watlington
	Organisation	The Parent Centre
	Key Theme	Using positive parenting to help various actors to understand their roles and responsibilities towards children.

All presentations can be accessed through the links given in these Meeting Highlights.

2. MAIN DISCUSSION POINTS FROM PARTICIPANTS

Presentations:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The context in which parenting support programmes are implemented, determine the particular challenges and opportunities for the programmes. Adaptability and flexibility was a common theme in responding to the needs of caregivers and children during C-19.
Issues/Concerns:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's becoming increasingly important to think about inclusivity in the ECD, especially as it related to parenting support programmes
CoP Activities/ Reflections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It's important to think about the risk that parenting support programmes run in formulating ready-made solutions for communities that they are not local to. ▪ Access a range of publications by the Children's Institute here: http://www.ci.uct.ac.za/ci/projects/theme/early-childhood-development



WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

Patsy Pillay, the facilitator for the KZN ECD CoP, welcomed participants to the second virtual KZN ECD CoP meeting for 2021. The CoP participants were invited to check in by introducing themselves, sharing which organization they were from and what their expectations were for the meeting.



SETTING THE SCENE

In a recent poll that Thandeka Rantsi, BRIDGE ECD Project Manager, put to the KZN ECD CoP, it emerged that the topic that CoP members most wanted to convene about was parenting. Reflecting on this, Patsy shared that the CoP's focus on parenting aligned with broader sectoral efforts; while Colleen Larkin, a CoP member, added that although parenting and parental involvement has always been the one area that practitioners invest a lot of support and capacity development initiatives in, the challenges are enduring. This comment was situated in the context of a recent statement by the Children's Institute, which shows that over 50% of children have experienced violence in the home environment, resulting in higher rates of violence and devastating consequences for communities. Not only do these statistical references warrant a deeper dive into parental support initiatives, they also necessitate a wider exposure to positive discipline techniques.



NATIONAL CoP and SECTORAL UPDATES

Thandeka shared updates on the following: The National ECD CoP, the Provincial CoPs, Special Interest Groups and a presentation to the Portfolio Committee of Social Development.

- **The National ECD CoP** held on 20 May 2021, focused on the Project for Inclusive Early Childhood Care Education (PIECCE). Shiela Drew, Hasina Ebrahim, Ruby Motaung and Candy Goodlad presented on the qualifications framework for level 6 and 7 qualifications that will ideally be offered in universities for ECCE educators.
- On 29 April 2021, **The Western Cape ECD CoP** looked at parenting, with a particular focus on positive parenting and psychosocial support programmes that identify and tackle socio-economic issues negatively affecting safe and effective caregiving, as addressed by the Ububele Education and Psychotherapy Trust and Peace Discipline. To advance this work and elevate the role of parents in ECD, the WC ECD CoP will be working on a parenting seminar.
- **The Mpumalanga CoP** is currently tracking child attendance trends in the province since the re-opening of the ECD programmes.
- The National ECD CoP has taken up discussions around incorporating **Special Interest Groups**, which will strengthen the CoP's influence in the sector and deepen BRIDGE's contribution to systemic change
- **BRIDGE had the opportunity to present to the Portfolio Committee for Social Development.** The inputs made were in line with the Real Reform Campaign, which was geared towards five key reforms in key pieces of legislation affecting

children and stakeholders working to protect and advance the holistic wellbeing and development of children.

- In an effort to engage more practitioners at grassroots level, Patsy shared that a few CoP members in the Chatsworth region have organized themselves at a district level to discuss sectoral issues and share best practice. This has helped CoP members feel more connected and start to think about how to connect with other actors, at different regional levels in the ECD space.

CLOWNS WITHOUT BORDERS SOUTH AFRICA: PARENTING FOR LIFE LONG HEALTH - MPUME DANISA AND HLENGIWE SACOLO

Clowns Without Borders South Africa is a non-profit organisation with physical presence in the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal. The organisation aims to improve the psychosocial wellbeing of children and communities affected by crises. To this end, Clowns Without Borders has partnered with other stakeholders on the Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) initiative which Mpume Danisa explained as follows:

To access Mpume Danisa's presentation, click [here](#)

- The PLH is a suite of non-commercial parenting programmes developed and tested through a collaboration: UNICEF, WHO, universities of Oxford, Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Bangor, in partnership with Clowns Without Borders SA (CWBSA) and similar organisations. The structure of the PLH partnership is depicted in the illustration below:

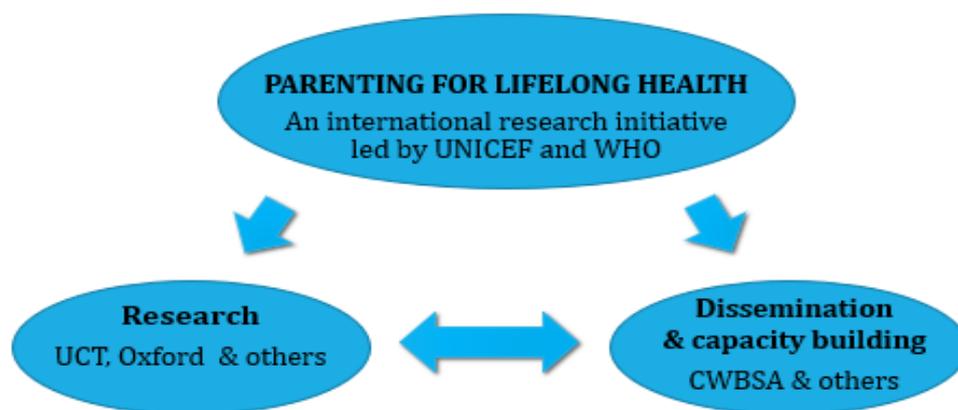


Figure 1: Structure of the PLH Initiative. CWBSA Presentation, Mpume Danisa

- Because many international parenting programmes are usually designed to suit high income country contexts, which often requires parents to contribute financially to support the upkeep of the programme; the PLH Initiative was adapted to suit middle- and low-income countries. The Initiative was developed and tested in South Africa, using rigorous evaluation methods, to ensure scalability.
- PLH programmes are evidence-informed, group-based programmes that are delivered at community level, using paraprofessionals such as community workers, social auxiliary workers, amongst others, in urban, peri-urban and rural contexts.

- PLH runs three main parenting programmes: Sinovuyo Kids, which caters for young children aged 2-9 years old and their caregivers over 8 or 12 sessions; Sinovuyo Teens, which supports adolescent children aged 10 – 17 years old and their caregivers over 14 sessions; and finally, the PLH Digital interventions which are geared towards giving Covid19- related parenting tips, through ParentChat, ParentApp and ParentText platforms.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE SINOVUYO KIDS PROGRAMME.

Mpume described the Sinovuyo Kids Programme¹ as one that mimics the building of a house- a house of support- where the foundation is parenting goal setting; the walls are positive parenting (which includes giving household instructions and rules, using praise and rewards systems etc.); and finally, the roof which can be seen as non-violent discipline, cultivated through healthy consequence management and conflict resolution, amongst other mechanisms. The Sinovuyo Kids model is illustrated in greater detail below:

Sinovuyo Kids: Building a House of Support

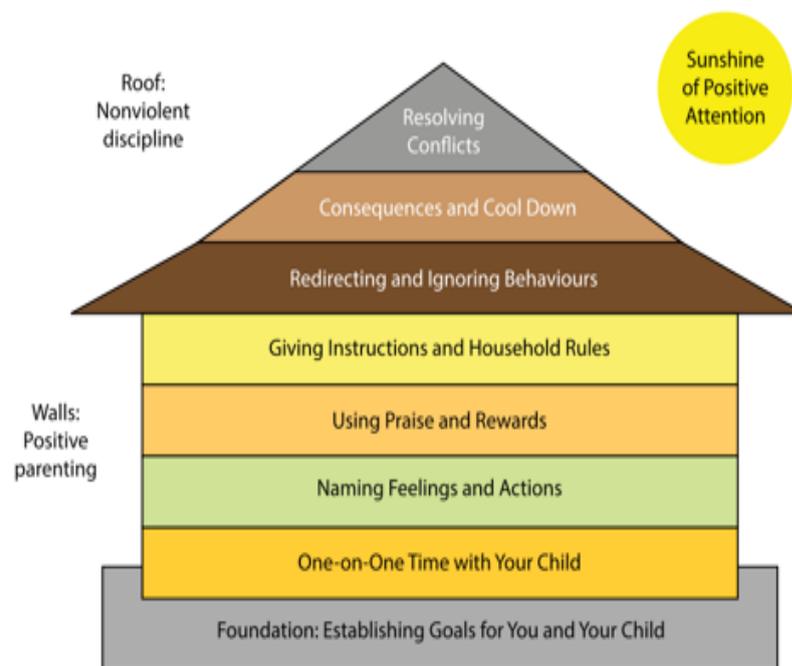


Figure 2: Sinovuyo Kids Programme Model. CWBSA Presentation, Mpume Danisa.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM PARETING FOR LIFELONG HEALTH IN-PERSON PROGRAMMES

Postdoctoral Researcher, Hlengiwe Sacolo reflected on the in-person PLH programmes that

¹ Sinovuyo Caring Families Programme is also known under the following names: “Furaha” – Swahili | “Rethabile” – Lesotho | “Esengo” – Lingala | “Koze Ado Ak Paran” (KAP) – Creole Haiti “Joyeuse Famille” – French | “Gelukkige Familie” - Afrikaans

are currently being implemented in about 25 countries, with the objective of reaching 400 families by 2022. The research component of the programme regards the spread and reach of these programmes as an opportunity, as it lends itself to the scale up of parenting evaluation research. The PLH programmes rests on evidence gathered through randomised control trials, however, what is currently being explored through a mixed-method study is what happens after the randomised control trials have been concluded and the implementation of the programme takes place in an uncontrolled environment during the roll-out- how do the dynamics on the ground affect the effectiveness of the programme? The lessons learned from engagement with partners on the qualitative aspects of the study are as illustrated below

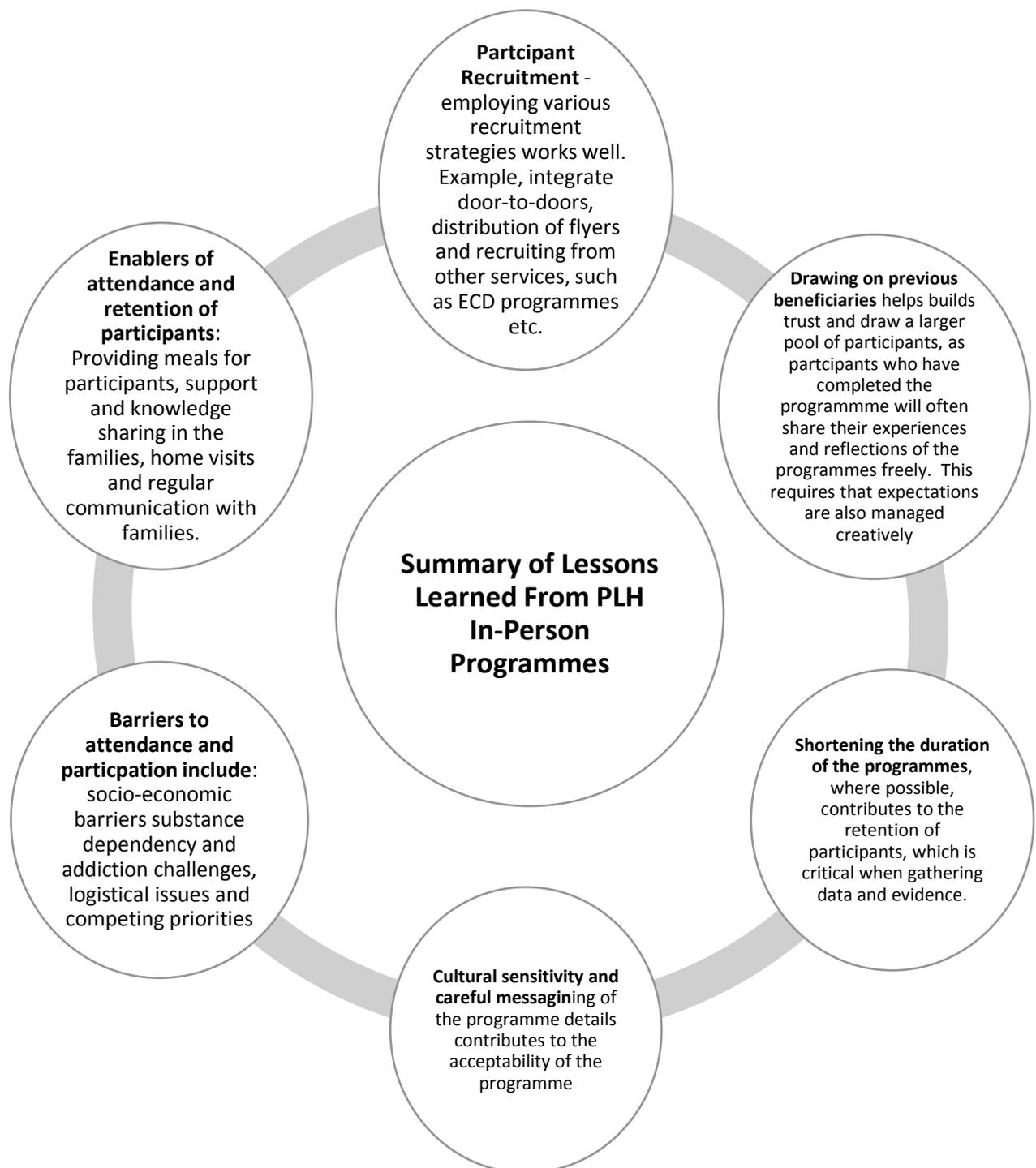


Figure 3 Lessons from the PLH In-Person Programmes

The CoP is reminded of BRIDGE’s knowledge management role. All meeting highlights, presentations and discussions are captured and shared on BRIDGE’s Knowledge Hub. To view Hlengiwe Sacolo’s presentation , follow this [link](#).



THE PARENT CENTRE: CAREGIVER SUPPORT AND PARENT- CHILD ENGAGEMENT– JANN WATLINGTON

The Parent Centre provides support for parents, caregivers, and professionals who work with children, by using positive parenting to help these actors to understand their roles and responsibilities towards children. The Parent Centre works with parents of children of all ages and ECD programmes’ staff, through the following support interventions:

- **Parenting and Leadership Training** – 11 sessions of 3 and a half hours of training for the governing body and leadership of ECD organisations. The training equips organisations to develop a positive parenting approach and healthier child behaviour management mindset and practice.
- **Child Behaviour Management** – 11 sessions of 3 and a half hours of training for ECD practitioners, including the principals, educators and teacher assistants. This training equips practitioners and ECD programme leaders to develop a socio-emotional understanding of children’s behaviour, in the context of their social and emotional development.
- **Positive Parenting Skills Training** – 7 sessions of 3 and a half hours of training that is aimed at parents and caregivers of children attending ECD programmes. The training is geared towards to deepening this category of caregivers’ understanding and application of positive parenting.
- **WhatsApp Positive Parenting Skills Training** – This is a training WhatsApp Group Chats that takes place two mornings a week, for 7 weeks. It includes an orientation session in the week before the training starts. Participants receive two 15-minute Voice Notes and Handouts to support parents in integrating positive parenting approaches in their parenting.
- **Fatherhood Training** – 6 sessions of 3 and a half hours to support participants in exploring their identity as fathers; developing an understanding of their roles as financial providers, caregiver, and role-models. The training challenges gender and parenting stereotypes, as well as cycles of violence in the home and community.
- **Corporal Punishment and Discipline Training** - 5 full day training for practitioners or parents. It delves deep into the sensitive and controversial topic of corporal punishment. The Corporal Punishment Training will help parents or practitioners who may struggle with this issue, help them develop a more in depth understanding of the difference between punishment and discipline, and learn many alternatives to punishment.
- **Parenting Talks at Parents’ Meetings** – 1-hour parenting talks as requested by ECD programmes. This is usually informed by what is happening in the ECD programmes and by what parents may be struggling with, e.g. sexuality and toddlers, work-home-life balance, etc.
- **Specialised Short workshops** - These are more detailed workshops of approximately 3 sessions of 3 and a half hours for parents and / or educators in the areas of need identified by the ECD Centre.
- **Parenting Counselling** – Counselling is short term and is aimed at engaging the parent into a partnership where information is shared, and the parent’s own problem-solving ability is facilitated. This offered both face-to-face and virtually via Zoom and WhatsApp.
- **Parent Support Group Facilitation Skills** – 6 sessions of 3 and a half hours to equip governing body members or anyone in leadership in the community to facilitate a parent support group for parents of the children attending the ECD programmes. The parent support group unpacks parenting challenges in a safe and non-judgemental space.
- **Community Radio Talks** – Regular radio slots on ECD programmes on specific matters relating to the wellbeing and development of young children. Occasionally, this includes sharing training content on air.

Figure 4: List of the Parent Centre's parent support programmes

Reflecting on what has worked well and what hasn't worked well in the programmes, Jann shared the following:

What has worked well?	What hasn't worked well?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is beneficial to equip both the educators/practitioners and the parent with the requisite skills as the child spends most of their time with both of them. • Often practitioners have been trained in ECD however there seems to be less emphasis on the social-emotional development and behaviour of the child. It is valuable to zoom in on the latter. • Many parents s have not experienced positive parenting or positive child behaviour management as children themselves, framing interventions in this way cultivates self-compassion and empathy for the child. • Regular supervision and support to facilitators and counsellors enables them to show up better. • Giving counselling clients an option of face to face, telephonic or online counselling, is able to meet a wider range of parents' needs. • Constantly reviewing and evaluating programmes enabled organisations to adapt during Covid-19. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loadshedding, poor network access, in certain areas, limited skills with technology, access to technology, cost of data etc. • Limited available funding and cost of training for the supporting organisations and ECD centres • Working hours of the ECD practitioner made it difficult for them to attend weekly training, during COVID-19 • Training ECD practitioners and parents together is not best practice as both need their own space to ventilate issues, share and learn. Both ECD practitioners and parents need a safe space to speak openly without judgement regarding their challenges with children and with each other. Even separating the training of principals from that of educators is ideal.

The following slide is a selection of the lessons learned in implementing a parenting support programme during COVID-19. To access the rest of Jann's presentation, click [here](#)

4. LEARNINGS BROUGHT BY C-19 REGARDING SUPPORT FOR CAREGIVERS

- Online learning and support for parents can be just as effective.
- Online programmes need to be cost effective and as easy and accessible as possible, without compromising the quality of our services.
- Patience and flexibility when it came to technological glitches.
- Trial and error are part of the process.
- Regular supervision and discussions, which includes open dialogue, debates and sharing of feelings can make a difficult process easier.
- All that many of our clients want is support, validation, being listened to, to feel safe, understood and not judged, to be taught new parenting skills and insights, and coming to find their own solutions to their challenges. Parents need to know that they are not alone in their struggles.

TPC's programmes offer all of these.



Figure 5: Lessons Learned during C-19. The Parent Centre, Jann Watlington

Jann concluded by sharing that while the impact of C-19 has severely affected ECD practitioners, parents and children emotionally, socially, financially and otherwise. Some support initiatives that have helped mediate this include: weekly general communication to encourage parents; direct communication with parents when children experience specific challenges; counselling referrals to parents who may be struggling and using staff meetings to chat through relevant issues to support staff, children and parents alike.



Q AND A

The following is a selection of questions and answers discussed during the question and answer session:

Question: How are parenting programmes supporting parents of children with disabilities?

Answer: while this is a good question, it's still an area of development for many parenting programmes.

The Parent Centre, in particular, offers parenting support and on-going staff development to this end.

Question: If it is not advisable to train parents and ECD practitioners together, how can we ensure that the relevant outcome is still achieved for both?

Answer: It's important to prioritise the needs of each group. The Parent Centre resolves this by having separate training days for different role-players.

Question: There is a risk that parenting support programmes run in formulating ready-made solutions for communities that they are not local to. How can we mitigate this?

Answer: This is very important to consider- especially in the planning phase, where the programme objectives are still being drawn up. None of this is easy, but it's important to find ways to build relationships and trust with beneficiaries and incorporate their viewpoints into the design and implementation of programmes geared towards benefitting them



OTHER UPDATES

Next CoP dates: 19 August and 4 October 2021. CoP members are encouraged to email Thandeka and Patsy to give their input on what should be discussed in the next CoP meeting, however a survey will be circulated to this end.



CHECK OUT

Next, Thandeka and Patsy thanked the presenters and participants for their attendance and participation, and the meeting was brought to a close.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Name and surname	Organisation
Colleen Osbourne	Midlands Community College
Julie Hayes	Singakwenza
Mari van der Merwe	CCRC
Nora Saneka	Point and Inner City ECD Forum
Patsy Pillay	New Beginnings
Poonam Dwakaram	LETCEE
Rebecca Wakeford	Midlands College
Adelle Naidoo	New Beginnings
Hlengiwe Sacolo	CWBSA
Mpume Danisa	CWBSA
Jann Watlington	PHL
Virginia Mashiane	BRIDGE
Thandeka Rantsi	BRIDGE
Kimberleigh Bodley	Alladin Learning Solutions
Sue Philpott	Disability Action Research Team
Nosiphiwe	Midlands community college
Romany Roberts – Apology	

